

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration. Claims 1-18, 44, 46 and 128-140 were previously pending in this application. By this amendment, Applicant is canceling claims 10, 12, 13, 44, 46, 128, and 129 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 1, 15, 18, 130, 131, 133-135, 138, and 140 have been amended. New claims 141-146 have been added. As a result, claims 1-9, 11, 14-18, and 130-146 are pending for examination with claims 130, 131, and 138 being independent claims.

New claim 141 depends from now independent claim 131 and recites subject matter described throughout the specification, for example on pages 26 and 28. New claim 142 depends from new claim 141 and recites subject matter described in the specification on, for example, pages 15, 20, 21, and 28. New claim 143 depends from new claim 142 and recites subject matter described in the specification on, for example, pages 20, 21, and 28. New claim 144 depends from new claim 141 and recites subject matter described in the specification on, for example, pages 15 and 28. New claim 145 depends from now independent claim 131 and recites subject matter described in the specification on, for example, pages 26 and 28. New claim 146 depends from now independent claim 130 and recites subject matter described in the specification on, for example, pages 15, 26, and 28.

No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Patent Office rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,946,890 to Meador, claims 1-18, 44, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by WO/57222 to Swager et al., and claims 128, 129, and 134-137 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,713,298 to McDevitt et al. The Office Action indicates that claims 130-133 and 138-140 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but that they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Without acceding to the propriety of the Patent Office's rejections and characterizations as set forth in the Office Action, Applicants have rewritten dependent claims 130, 131, and 138 in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims

and have rewritten the remaining rejected claims, where necessary, to depend directly or indirectly from one of now independent claims 130, 131, or 138. This has been done solely to expedite prosecution and place this application in condition for allowance. Because each of claims 130, 131, and 138 was indicated in the Office Action as reciting patentable subject matter, and because all the pending claims now depend from, directly or indirectly, and include each and every limitation of one of the these claims, it is believed the present rejections have been overcome, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

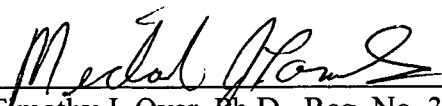
Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuing applications directed to the rejected claims and/or any other canceled subject matter.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

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